DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 245 490 EC 162 850

AUTHOR Mitchell, Martin L.; Nicolaou, Abraham
TITLE From Multidisciplinary to Interdisciplinary: Training the Educateur Generalist.
PUB DATE Apr 84
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children (62nd, Washington, DC, April 23-27, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cooperative Programs; *Emotional Disturbances; *Interdisciplinary Approach; *Internship Programs; *Professional Education; Program Descriptions; *Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS *Educateurs; Starr Commonwealth Schools; Western Michigan University

ABSTRACT

Western Michigan University and Starr Commonwealth School jointly provide a training program to prepare "educateurs"--interdisciplinary specialists who can function in a team process of treatment and in a wide range of living and learning environments with emotionally disturbed youth. The training program involves two major components--academic work sequences to develop competencies as a clinical practitioner in special educaton with formation and skills in allied discipline areas, and internship and directed teacher experiences. Internships focus on skills in being a team member, preparation of growth (treatment) plans, the value of regular service learning projects, the value of the arts as creative and productive experiences, knowledge of physical and recreational activities, exposure to outdoor adventure education, understanding of peer group counseling concepts, family/parent involvement, and spiritual awareness. Both formative and summative methods are used to evaluate intern performance. (SW)

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FROM MULTIDISCIPLINARY TO INTERDISCIPLINARY: TRAINING THE EDUCATEUR GENERALIST

Prepared for

THE COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

CONFERENCE

Washington, D.C.

April 1984

by

Dr. Martin L. Mitchell

The Starr Commonwealth Schools

and

Dr. Abraham Nicolaou

Western Michigan University

EC162850

Not for reprint
To be submitted for publication

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FROM MULTIDISCIPLINARY TO INTERDISCIPLINARY:

TRAINING THE EDUCATEUR GENERALIST

INTRODUCTION

In September 1980, Western Michigan University, in conjunction with The Starr Commonwealth Schools, embarked on a joint training program venture for the preparation of educating a new professional based on a European concept for the care and education of children: the educateur. Essentially the commitment launched a voyage on uncharted water in that, not only was the concept itself in an embryonic and formative stage of development, but university personnel training programs were scarcely in existence and only one or two in number. Consequently, the most immediate task was to provide form and substance to an emerging approach by attempting to operationalize its major tenets. This was to be accomplished through the identification of a discrete set of training experiences and competencies that would ultimately define the educateur professional. Before describing the elements of the training program, however, a brief historical sketch of the educateur movement is needed to set the framework for understanding the form of the present program structure.

BACKGROUND OF THE EDUCATEUR MOVEMENT

Historically, the educateur originated in Europe in response to the care needs of vast numbers of displaced children and youth following World War II. Care givers under these circumstances, to be responsive to the total psychological and physical needs of individuals they served, were required not only to act in multiple capacities, but to develop new forms of organizing and providing child care services. The core emphasis on treatment of children in their

daily life milieu; provision for a variety of enriching program activities and experiences and team concepts of treatment were challenging traditional mental health practices prevailing in this country. As this form of care giving became established in the human service profession and delivery system in Europe, its realistic and practical benefits for mental health and education practices on this continent became increasingly recognized.

Numerous forces and individuals contributed to this impetus, not the least of which were the international writings of Guindon (1973) who described the use of the reeducation process with delinquent youth in France. On this continent, reeducation programs in Montreal, Canada also used holistic principles in their treatment practices (Tessier, 1974). In an effort to bring historical and conceptual clarity to the roots and strands of the educateur model as it was evolving in America, Brendtro (1980) depicted the approach as a bridge between teaching and treatment. A further extension of this thinking is found in a text by Brendtro and Ness (1983) who describe the psychoeducational approach as a "synthesis of other specific strategies that results in a holistic practice model. The quality of a child's total experience is seen as central to reeducation" (p. 15). The book fully explicates those elements that are necessary and integral to the reeducative process if effective environments for teaching and treatment are to be created.

As a response to the growing interest and value ascribed to holistic orientations to the learning and growth needs of children/youth, Western Michigan University, in affiliation with The Starr Commonwealth Schools, established a graduate educateur training program beginning in the Fall of 1980. The discussions for structuring and implementing a joint program of this nature were facilitated by several key factors. The two institutions

and selected representatives had worked closely together since the early seventies when Starr was engaged in a strategic and far sweeping reorganization of its administrative and treatment structure. During this period the Special Education Department at Western was involved in providing an on-site training program for the recertification of education personnel in response to the passage of mandatory special education laws in the state. Also, the psychoeducational training emphasis received by teachers of the emotionally disturbed at Western was congruent with the treatment changes and directions that had evolved at Starr. Further, the two institutions were in relatively direct and conveniently accessible geographical proximity through a nearby interstate highway. Although the foundations for a cooperative program venture were in place, nevertheless, a number of more practical and immediate issues required attention and resolution if the program was to be a working reality. Among these were program structure and content, teacher certification requirements, recruitment procedures and admission criteria, financial aid, leadership and coordinative personnel, and so forth.

The common denominator and guiding conviction during and throughout the program planning phases was the central belief that the primary training thrust, whatever specific forms it may take, should be directed to developing an inter-disciplinary generalist who could effectively function in a team process of treatment and do so in a wide range of living and learning environments. In short, the training sequence and experience would be organized to impact on the trainee in such a way that their primary perception of themselves would be that of a care provider in an interdisciplinary team process but who, secondarily, would be capable of performing in a variety of roles to be responsive to the care needs of youth and total milieu. In

short, the educateur. This then was the general context in which the training sequence and specific experiences were molded.

THE TRAINING PROGRAM

The training experiences involve two major components; 1) Academic course work sequences taken on the campus of Western Michigan University that are designed to develop competencies as a clinical practitioner in special education with information and skills in allied discipline areas (mental health/recreation, counseling, social work, juvenile justice, psychology, and other elective fields); 2) Internship and directed teacher experiences that require a minimum of twenty contact hours per week at The Starr Commonwealth Schools. Interns are immersed in the full range of treatment team processes and responsibilities expected of regularly employed educateur staff and teachers at the facility. The full extent and nature of these internship requirements will be outlined and described subsequently under the section entitled "The Educateur Internship Experience."

ACADEMIC SEQUENCE

Admission to the program is based on the following criteria: 1) A bachelor degree in social and behavioral sciences, 2) A teaching certificate, 3) A point hour ratio of at least 2.6 (A = 4.0) in the last 60 hours of undergraduate course work, 4) Formal admission to the Graduate College and the Department of Special Education, 5) A successful interview with Western Michigan University and The Starr Commonwealth School's staff.

The program structure and specific course sequence is shown on the following page:

Course Requirements

Term I (Fall - 15 weeks)

SPED	530	Education of Exceptional Persons	3 s.h.
SPED	589	Programs & Intervention Strategies for the Socially & Emotionally Maladjusted	4 s.h.
SPED	636	Topical Seminar: Educateur Practicum I	2 s.h.
ART	560	Art Education for the Elementary Teacher	3 s.h.
PSYCH	517	Psychology of Learning for Teachers	3 s.h.

Term II (Winter - 15 weeks)

SPED	533	Diagnostic & Prescriptive Techniques in Special Ed.	4 s.h.
SPED	534	Curricular and Instructional Provisions for Exceptional Children & Youth	4 s.h.
SPED	637	Research & Evaluation Techniques in Special Education	4 s.h.
SPED	572	Community Agency Resources	2 s.h.
SPED	636	Topical Seminar: Educateur practicum II	2 s.h.

Term III (Spring 7½ weeks) & Term IV (Summer 7½ weeks)

SPED	635	Counseling Parents of Exceptional Children & Youth	3 s.h.
SPED	674	Directed Teaching in Special Education	6 s.h.
Electives			5 s.h.

Master's Degree Comprehensive Examination

The undergraduate special education training program at Western Michigan University is predicated on the clinical teacher model concept that emphasizes the primary and integral nature of four major components in the instructional

process. These are: diagnosis, prescription, implementation, and evaluation. Courses in the curriculum are based on identified competencies that are organized and taught according to the content and process features of each of the four clinical teaching components. In this manner the preservice teacher is not only knowledgeable and informed as to what the diagnosis is, for example, but also its methods of application and use in given stances. In this way the special education curriculum training focus is on those characteristics and skills common to effective instruction of the handicapped and the similarities of their learning and behavioral characteristics as opposed to their differences. In addition to this generic approach in the preparation of special educators, however, a recognition of the unique attributes and qualities of particular handicapping conditions is acknowledged through retention of specialty courses and experiences (for example SPED 589 and 674 in the course sequence outlined above). Majors in the emotionally impaired curriculum are received in a psychoeducation orientation that is an eclectic synthesis of several prevailing intervention strategies. Therefore, from a special education preparation standpoint, the educateur trainee is an informed clinical practitioner who possesses a holistic perspective with regard to the educational and behavioral needs to the disturbed child/youth.

In addition to the special education requirements described, a thirteen semester hour group of cognate courses was identified to address the related child care dimensions of the Educateur's work and responsibilities. These pertain to such areas as group dynamics, counseling, recreation, community agencies, behavioral management, creative dramatics and arts, juvenile delinquency, sex education, drug abuse, holistic health care, conflict management and resolution and so forth. A consistent core of courses has

developed which educateurs elect in their program, whereas the election of others is often influenced by such factors as availability, individual needs, and program experience priorities.

THE EDUCATEUR INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

In addition to the wide range of academic experiences interns are exposed to at Western Michigan University, numerous hands-on experiences are offered to interns through their twenty-hour-per-week internship at The Starr Commonwealth Schools. Starr is a multi-service agency that annually serves over 1000 children and families through alternative schools, out-patient clinics and residential treatment programs. Internship experiences are primarily focused on residential treatment issues, however, interns do have opportunities to learn about other types of services.

As an intern becomes indoctrinated in Starr's philosophies regarding treatment of troubled youth, much more is learned than merely a textbook approach. Interns are intertwined in the very life blood of the organization and therefore, are able to put into practice many of the valuable concepts learned at the University setting.

The internship experience in a residential treatment program for one year alone is an experience that most interns relish and often reflect upon the camaraderie and esprit de corps which develops among intern participants. While this attribute of the program possibly may be the most important when compared to all others, the remaining portion of this section will focus on more definable skills that interns secure during their one year experience.

Teamwork

One of the very first and probably the most important skills an intern

must learn is how to be a team member. Only through effective teamwork can treatment be fully implemented, therefore, much time and effort is spent in this area. Interns immediately are considered a member of the treatment team and serve with other professionals which include counselors, teachers, child care workers and other professionals. These titles are used only for understanding by the reader and to provide a reference point because all staff at Starr Commonwealth are titled as "educateurs;" "total life generalist working with troubled youth."

Through experiencing teamwork, interns learn guidelines for effective consensus, they learn the foundations of teamwork and how to organize teams. Skills such as listening, supporting and differing are stressed and learned during the experience as well as various leadership styles explored. The importance of effective consensus decision making is also at the heart of this experience. Interns quickly learn the value of being a supportive team participant and the value this holds in providing quality care.

Growth Planning

Interns learn to prepare Growth (treatment) Plans as part of the experience.

Because each child has different needs, capabilities, problems, difficulties and talents, a personal plan of growth must be devised for each child. Therefore, a total growth plan for each is essential.

These plans include four basic components: 1) The personal plan; 2) The family plan; 3) The educational plan and 4) The continuing services plan. Each plan simply outlines the assets and liabilities in reference to each of the above components. Through careful construction of these plans baselines may be established for monitoring behavior change.

While interns play a very passive role in a treatment team's development of growth plans early in the internship experience, it is not uncommon for interns to play a very major role in the establishment of growth plans later in the internship experience.

Service Learning

Because a basic foundation of Starr Commonwealth's treatment philosophy is centered around people helping other people, interns learn the value of service learning projects.

Through regular service learning projects, the helping process commonly encouraged "inside" a residential treatment setting can be generalized to other citizens in the community. The helping process is extended beyond the inside group to others in a more natural setting who are in need. As young people learn to be of value to others, their own feelings of worthiness increase and thus self concepts improve. As Allen and Mitchell (1982) state, a wide variety of activities may be included.

> "Students and staff engage in a wide variety of volunteer activities, typically with senior citizens, smaller children and the handicapped. Thus a group may help a nursing home by presenting skits for the residents or provide recreation for disadvantaged children in a Head Start Program." These projects cannot be contrived artificial or make work, but must be a genuine response to meeting human needs."

The Arts

Interns learn the value of the arts including visual arts and crafts, creative dramatics and music appreciation and participation. They learn that the arts provide a wide variety of creative and productive experiences which can strengthen a young person's self esteem. These activities are directed

toward development of self awareness, personal expression and communication.

In implementing an arts program interns learn that a seasonal or holiday focus can be most useful. In all cases whether experienced as a spectator or as a participant interns learn that the arts are yet another means of self expression and enjoyment for the young people they serve.

Physical Education and Recreation

Young people, particularly those with emotional problems, need outlets for excess energy. A creative staff member who has broad knowledge of physical and recreational activities is a valuable asset on any treatment team. As part of the internship experience interns learn the value of these activities and how to balance program planning to reflect the importance of recreative activity.

While competitive sports can foster teamwork and cooperation, emphasis on solid individual conditioning appears to have a more profound influence on behavior change. Because play is one of the most normal means of a child's self expresion it can be easily encouraged through physical activity. Interns learn that physical education and recreation programs should place emphasis on the development of strong, healthy bodies and help build feelings of self worth in both team and individual activities. The goal is to encourage the young people served to reach their highest potential.

Outdoor Adventure Education

Year-round outdoor activities play a vital treatment and educational role at Starr. Treatment staff often can relate to youth in natural settings in a more relaxed way. Young people learn from nature through camping, hiking, canoeing, rock climbing and trips to farms, museums, and wildlife sanctuaries. These activities are designed to promote self confidence, a positive self

image and to foster positive group spirit and cooperation.

Interns are exposed to these activities throughout the year and learn the importance of them. An excellent example of an outdoor education program which fosters group cohesiveness and cooperation is the use of ropes and initiatives courses. Interns very early in their experience get a first hand look at these activities. Within the first week of their experience during their orientation to the residential facility they go through a ropes and initiatives course as an intern group. This activity not only fosters cohesiveness among the interns but also immediately gives them a tool which they can later in their experience use when supervising a group of young people.

Peer Group Counseling

As part of the internship experience, participants gain a thorough understanding of peer group counseling concepts. Interns learn that as a young person learns to be of value to others, feelings of worthiness and positive self esteem quickly emerge. A climate of shared responsibility and concern where youth assist one another can be established. (Vorath and Brendtro, (1974)

Interns learn that an understanding of others can only exist in a climate of mutual concern, so positive and caring behavior must be a valued and accepted part of any healthy treatment environment. Through daily experiences and group sessions the positive values of caring, helping and responsibility are constantly emphasized.

In the early stages of the internship experience, again most interns play a very passive role in developing this type of group atmosphere. Most

of their energies are spent on observation. Near the completion of the internship experience, however, interns find themselves fully equipped and capable of developing a positive peer group environment. The skills for developing such an environment among young people, have proven to be very influential as interns seek employment after completion of the program. Most human service programs and systems are seeking individuals who have the savvy and ability to establish such an atmosphere.

Family Participation

Probably the most drastic change over the past ten years in residential treatment settings is that attitude held by treatment staff toward the families of youth in placement. Starr Commonwealth places a very strong emphasis on family/parent involvement. Parents are treated as partners in the helping process. Interns, therefore, quickly learn that the families of young can be a valuable asset in bringing about behavior change.

Interns conduct family meetings, arrange for parent days, visit the homes of youth, and participate in the development of the family plan which is designed to capitalize on all the assets of the family. By working with many different families and family socio-economic circumstances, interns gain a wide range of knowledge which can be drawn upon later in their professional careers.

Spiritual Awareness

This area in residential treatment settings probably above all other areas of concentration, presents a paradox since spiritual beliefs can neither be mandated nor ignored. Interns learn that the difficulty is found in designing a spiritual program that can meet both of these demands.

Interns, therefore, participate in the development of a religious program

that explores all religions through non-denominational services and activities. Through object lessons, audio-visual presentations, music and readings of the scriptures, young people can develop a spiritual foundation based on their own preference. Interns assist youth in their participation through drama, readings, and music.

In all these activities the positive values of loving, caring, and helping can be encouraged without specific reference to a particular religious belief. Through spiritual awareness, interns offer the youth served an opportunity to pause and reflect on their lives. As young people deal with their problems, a peaceful spiritual environment can provide safety and a place where new insight can be gained.

Academic and Vocational Activities

With the heavy concentration at Western Michigan University on the clinical teacher model which incorporates diagnosis, prescription, implementation, and evaluation, interns not only learn about this educational approach but also have the opportunity to implement the system. As part of the internship experience, the interns work alongside a special education teacher certified in the area of emotionally impaired for an eight week block of time.

Individualized educational plans are written for each young person and a diagnostic prescriptive model is employed. Interns participate in the full range of development and implementation of these plans.

In addition to participating in meeting the strict academic needs of the students, interns also help develop a variety of vocational experiences. These may include career awareness labs, metal shops, woodshops, stained glass shops and so forth.

The internship experience places interns in a total living, loving and learning environment which is dedicated to the total growth of each child. Through participation in all of the above mentioned treatment areas, interns are exposed to a well-rounded psycho-educational environment and experience numerous ways of reaching hard to reach children and youth.

EVALUATION

Formative - Several methods have been employed for the on-going or formative evaluation of intern performance in the varying facets of the program. Experience has shown that the information yielded from these methods has provided opportunities to make beneficial corrections either in program content/procedure or with individual interns directly. Among the devices used for on-going assessment purposes are the following.

1. Intern Survey Form - A 48 item questionnaire that measures the perceived degree of intern satisfaction with various facets of the program ranging from course work, clinical experience, to such personal factors as housing, financial aid, and transportation support is administered. The full programmatic potential of this survey method has yet to be realized and difficulties encountered in developing a more systematic method of administration and reporting of results are being refined and corrected. Immediate plans are to administer the survey on a pre-post basic format so that early program perceptions may be compared to later ones for more reliable information. An additional improvement will result from using internal rather than external resources (computer equipment and personnel) to analyze and report results.

2. Course Work Competency - Special education courses that are required in curriculum are competency based and thus provide a continuous monitoring of the achievement progress of interns. In most cases, interns elect courses

as a group thereby minimizing the logistical problems inherent in communicating with several instructors as opposed to only one. The program advisor for the interns is alerted and consultation is conducted to resolve those difficulties that may be potentially threatening to program success.

3. Clinical Internship Proficiency - A two semester on-site seminar is the focal point for appraising "on-the-job" performance. The central feature of the seminar is the alignment of topical presentations and assignments to assist and facilitate the educateur's daily functions in the clinical setting. Thus, at the information level the intern learns about group dynamics, and at the practical level completes a daily log that requires an analysis of group factors operating in the group of youth to which she/he is assigned. Class assignments are critiqued by field coordinators who direct the treatment programs on those campus locations where interns are assigned clinical duties. In this manner the staff who have immediate direct supervisory responsibility for the interns are able to observe the discrepancies, if any, that exist between learning and application situations and to take any necessary remedial steps.

Summative - Systematic methods for evaluation of program efficacy are now in the planning stages. Sufficient operational experience has been accrued to now enable attention to be more legitimately devoted to important follow-up questions pertaining to program practices and job success of educateur graduates. Two major areas have been identified with regard to the need for follow-up information: 1) Demographic data on educateur graduates that would provide facts as to the nature, location, length of employment, and so forth, 2) Program effectiveness information that would enable inferences to be drawn as to probable relationships existing between previous training and perceived or actual job success. Design and instrumentation to assess each of these areas are in the formative stages.

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